CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN EAST TIMOR

1520: The Portuguese land in Timor in quest of sandalwood.

1702: The Portuguese establish a settlement in East Timor.

1912: Uprising of Timorese led by the powerful king, Don Boaventura, against Portuguese control. It was bloodily crushed.

1941-1943: Australian commandos fight 15,000 troops of the Japanese Imperial Army with Timorese support. Over 40,000 Timorese and only 40 Australians die.

1974: A military coup in Lisbon overthrows the Portuguese dictatorship. Political parties are formed in East Timor: ASDT (renamed FRETILIN — pro-independence); UDT (pro-Portugal) and the insignificant APODETI (pro-Indonesian). FRETILIN later became the only party to struggle for the liberation of East Timor and to be known internationally.

August 1975: UDT attemts a coup which leads to civil war which FRETILIN wins.

November 28, 1975: FRETILIN declares independence and proclaims the Democratic Republic of East Timor (DRET).

December 7, 1975: Indonesia launches a full-scale invasion. 60,000 East Timorese are indiscriminately murdered or tortured to death leaving an unknown number of orphans.

December 12, 1975: UN General Assembly calls on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor. Australia votes for this resolution, while US abstains.

December 3, 1978: FRETILIN radio link with Darwin — its only one with outside world — ends.

December 31, 1978: Nicolau Lobato, President of DRET, murdered by Indonesian troops.

June 1980: Timorese uprising in capital, Dili, coincides with FRETILIN attacks near city.

July 1982: ALP Federal Conference unanimously passes policy in support of East Timor's self-determination.

1983: Counter-offensive by a reconstructed FRETILIN, with support of all nationalists tired of atrocities committed by the corrupt Indonesian army which is eager to rob as much as it can.

June 1983: The Vatican representative in East Timor, Monsignor Lopes, is removed by the Vatican under Indonesian pressure.

January 1985: Radio contact between FRETILIN in East Timor and Darwin is re-established.

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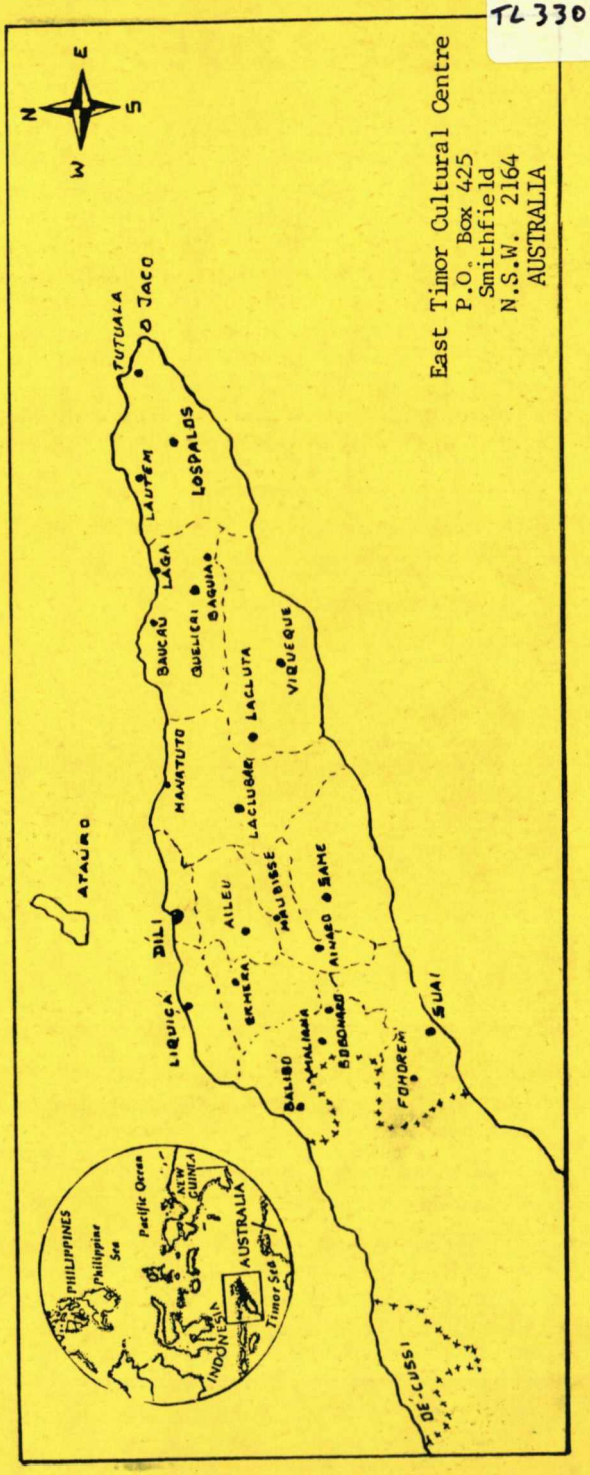

EAST TIMOR —

Position: Timor Island is about 600 kms north of Darwin. It is the biggest of the lesser Sunda group. it lies between 8°15′ and 10°30′S and between 123°20′ and 127°10′E. It is bound to the south by the Timor Sea which separates it from Australia; on the north-west by the Savu Sea, separating it from the islands of Sumba, Flores and Solor, and ot the north by the Wetar Sea, which lies between it and the island of Wetar.

Composition: Eastern part of Timor island, the enclave of Oe-Cussi, Atauro island and Jaco islet.

Total area: Approximately 18,900 square km.

Capital of East Timor: Dili.

Other significant towns: Baucau, Lospalos, Ermera, Manatuto, Viqueque, Liquica, Maliana, Ainaro, Suai and Bazartete.

Topography: East Timor is largely undulating hills and valleys. There are some important high plains, the main ones being around Baucau and Lautem. Lowlands are found around the coast and river valleys. The main such lowlands are around Maliana near the Indonesian border. The highest peaks are in the central range, the highest being Mount Tatamailau, which rises to about 3,000 metres above sea level.

THE LAND —

Rivers: Few of East Timor's rivers have a permanent course. The main rivers are Laclo and Lois on the north coast. None are navigable and in the wet season flood dramatically.

Climate: East Timor has a tropical climate and is subject to monsoons from November to April, which forms the wet season. The other is the dry season. The geographical diversity of the country produces local climatic differences. The coast is hot and humid, with average temperatures from 19°to 31°, while in the mountains, temperatures fall as low as 4°. North of the central range there is only one rainy season, while to its south there are two.

Flora: East Timor has bush, forests, grass savannahs and mangroves. The main species of trees include sandal, casuarina, acacia, eucalyptus, teak, ironwood, rosewood and magnolia. Among its many fruits are bananas, mangoes, jakfruit, breadfruit and various citrus.

Fauna: Timor is situated where Asian native fauna mix with the truly Australasian fauna. Common birds include lorikeets, yellow-crested cockatoos, crows, eagles, pigeons and doves. The most important reptiles include salt- and fresh-water crocodiles and pythons. Mammals include deer, monkeys, and lemurs, and one marsupial, the *phalanger orientalis* (known as *meda* in Timor). In the lowlands, water buffalos serve as farmers' work animals. The abundant marine life includes many fish, mussels, crustaceans, as well as turtles and dolphins.

THE PEOPLE

Population: 650,000 Timorese lived in East Timor in 1974, according to a Portuguese census. The Catholic Church estimated 670,000. Today, most estimates put the number at about 500,000.

Ethnic groups: Over the many centuries, the successive waves of migration that travelled through East Timor — Malay, Melanesian, etc. — left their physical traces on the population, as did the later European invasion. The big majority is described as proto-Malay, and are of dark complexion in a multi-racial population.

Languages: There are over thirty distinct linguistic groups. The most widely spoken language is Tetum which has become a *lingua franca.*

Religion: The main religions are animist and Roman Catholic.

Arts: Many talented islanders have sculpted and worked metals, using their natural sense of art and beauty. One house-building method which is well-known is that practised in the extreme eastern part of the island where houses are built on a platform over four poles. Timorese women specialise in producing the traditional clothes known as *tais* in colors traditional to the region.

Economy: The economy is based on agriculture and stock-raising. Its main exports include coffee, copra and rubber. Many natural resources, including petroleum and natural gas are not commercially exploited. Sandalwood, which was exported intenseley in the past, is now an endangered species.